



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

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## European Union

## Solid Wood Products

## EU Action Plan to Combat Illegal Logging 2003

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**Report Highlights:**

The European Commission published the EU Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, establishing a process and a package of measures through which they intend to tackle the problem of illegal logging and related trade.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Brussels USEU [BE2]  
[E2]

The Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament (COM (2003) 251 final) on forest law enforcement, governance and trade can be downloaded from the web at

[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/dpi/cnc/doc/2003/com2003\\_0251en01.doc](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/dpi/cnc/doc/2003/com2003_0251en01.doc) (32 pages)

This document sets out a process and a package of measures through which the European Commission proposes to address the growing problem of illegal logging and related trade. Addressing this issue is one of the European Commission's priorities in the follow-up to the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

The Action Plan is the start of a process which places particular emphasis on governance reforms and capacity building, supported by actions aimed at developing multilateral co-operation and complementary demand-side measures designed to reduce the consumption of illegally harvested timber in the EU (and ultimately major consumer markets elsewhere in the world).

**Development co-operation:** Efforts will be focused on promoting equitable and just solutions to the illegal logging problem which do not have an adverse impact on poor people; helping partner countries to build systems to verify timber has been harvested legally; promoting transparency of information; capacity building for partner country governments and civil society; and promoting policy reform.

**Trade in timber:** The EU will initiate a longer-term process of dialogue with wood-producing and wood-consuming countries to extend international collaboration to tackle illegal logging and to develop a multilateral framework on which actions could be based. In the immediate term, a voluntary licensing scheme is proposed, whereby partner countries issue a permit attesting to the legality of timber exported to the EU. This will require a Council Regulation for implementation. The Commission will review options for, and the impact of, further measures, including, in the absence of multilateral progress, the feasibility of legislation to control the imports of illegally produced timber into the EU.

**Public procurement:** Practical information will be provided to guide contracting authorities on how to deal with legality when specifying timber in procurement procedures.

**Private sector initiatives:** Measures are proposed to encourage private sector initiatives for good practice in the forest sector, including the use of voluntary codes of conduct to source only legal timber.

**Financing and investment safeguards:** Banks and financial institutions which invest in the forest sector should be encouraged to develop due diligence procedures which take account of the environmental and social impact of forest sector lending; including conformity with relevant legislation. Export Credit Agencies should be encouraged to develop guidance on improved project screening procedures and codes of practice for forest sector projects.

**Implementation:** To support implementation of the above activities, a co-ordinated EU response is proposed, drawing on the different strengths and capacities of the Commission and EU Member states. A joint work programme will be prepared with Member States to facilitate this.

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